



January 24, 2017

KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-17-23

SUBJECT: LTP–Environmental Quality Incentives Program–Fiscal Year 2017 National On-Farm Energy Initiative

Purpose: To provide guidance for administering the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) National On-Farm Energy Initiative (NOFEI)

Expiration Date: September 30, 2017

Background

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Title II, Subtitle F–EQIP, Section 2501, provides authority for use of EQIP (as a national purpose) to specifically address energy conservation through conservation practice implementation and for development of an Agricultural Energy Management Plan (AgEMP). During FY2017, the program is designed to assist producers in two ways:

- 1) Identify ways to reduce energy use on their farms through an AgEMP conservation activity plan (CAP), also known as an on-farm energy audit.
- 2) Provide assistance to implement various recommended measures through the use of conservation practice (CP) standards that address inefficient use of on-farm energy.

Application evaluation cutoff period was announced under Bulletin KS300-16-40, Fiscal Year 2017 Environmental Quality Incentives Program Cutoff Date. Field offices will accept applications on a continuous basis. Applications received after the announced cutoff period will be considered during the next cutoff period.

Eligible Land Uses, Resource Concerns, and CPs

The eligible land uses, resource concerns, and CPs are available in Attachment 1.

The following CAP is offered as part of the NOFEI.

- AgEMP (128)

Screening Criteria

Attachment 2 contains the NOFEI Screening Criteria Worksheet which shall be completed for each eligible NOFEI application. A screening priority of HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW must be recorded in Program Contracts System (ProTracts).

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DIST: A, F, S

To receive HIGH screening priority, the application must include an AgEMP (128) OR the application includes at least 1 “Core” CP (374, 449, 533, 670, 672) necessary to implement the recommendations identified in a completed AgEMP (128) or comprehensive on-farm energy audit meeting American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) S612 Type 2 Audit (Attachment 3). AgEMP 122/124 meet the ASABE S612 Type 2 standard.

To receive MEDIUM screening priority, the application includes zero “Core” CPs, but does include at least 1 “Supporting” CP necessary to implement the recommendations identified in a previously completed AgEMP Plan (128) or comprehensive on-farm energy audit meeting ASABE S612 Type 2 standard.

LOW screening priority will be given to all other applications not meeting requirements for HIGH or MEDIUM priority. LOW priority applications will not be ranked.

ProTracts Ranking Tool

All eligible applications will be ranked in the ProTracts Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool (AERT). The ProTracts fund code for the NOFEI is “FY17 On-Farm Energy.” The ProTracts cost list is “KScountynameEQIP2017-01-EQIP.” The Toolkit cost list is “KS17_EQIP.”

National ranking questions are consistent for all EQIP applications; however, only questions 1a, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 4d, 4c, 8a, 8b, and 9a apply to the NOFEI. All other national questions shall be answered “No.” Refer to bulletin KS300-17-8–Fiscal Year 2017 Environmental Quality Incentives Program–Ranking Process–National Priorities for additional guidance on answering national questions.

A copy of the state and local ranking questions are provided in Attachment 4.

Applications including a CAP will have significant ranking priority by receiving the total maximum points available in the ranking process. If application is made for a CAP, then question 1 for each of the national, state, and local ranking questions will be answered “Yes,” and all remaining national, state, and local ranking questions will be answered “No.” The ProTracts application type of “planning” must be associated with each CAP application and ranking of these applications is required in FY2017.

NOTE: CAPs require the use of a Technical Service Provider (TSP) to complete a conservation plan. See electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG), Section III, CAPs Technical Criteria, for CAP requirements.

Capturing Energy Benefits – An “Energy Benefits” button is available in ProTracts to capture estimated energy savings. This button must be checked “yes” for all contract items implemented as part of NOFEI and based on the recommendations provided as part of a completed on-farm energy audit. Checking “yes” requires the user to enter the numeric values accurately in the correct units for the estimated energy savings and the reduction of greenhouse gases and air pollutants directly associated with the energy savings from the completed on-farm energy audit. If values for energy benefits are not available from an AgEMP or energy audit, they can be obtained from the COMET Farm Quick Energy tool: <http://cometfarm.nrel.colostate.edu/QuickEnergy>

Note: The correct units for energy savings is in millions of British thermal units (MMBtu). This was previously labeled incorrectly as mBtu on the Energy Benefits button. AgEMPs may also be incorrectly labeled, but provide the correct value for energy savings in millions of Btu's. If in doubt, using the COMET Farm Quick Energy tool should verify that energy savings is reported correctly.

The "Energy Benefits" should be checked "no" for AgEMP CAP applications since energy savings do not occur unless the recommended measures provided in an AgEMP CAP report are implemented.

An agency-approved worksheet has been developed to calculate an energy cost efficiency score for ranking purposes (Attachment 5). The "Energy Cost Efficiency Worksheet" uses information from an AgEMP or other ASABE S612 compliant on-farm energy audit to calculate an energy savings to project cost score.

All eligible applications shall be entered into the Conservation Programs Geographic Information System Interface (CPGI). All answers available on the CPGI report will be used to answer the corresponding question on the ProTracts Application Evaluation and Ranking Tool (AERT). The application identification number in CPGI will match the application identification number from ProTracts.

Contact: Please forward questions through established channels to Joel A. Willhoft, Resource Conservationist, at (785) 624-3127 or email joel.willhoft@ks.usda.gov.

(signed)

ERIC B. BANKS
State Conservationist

Attachments